

Message Text

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FOR EAGLEBURGER FROM S/PRS - BROWN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE RE KISSINGER/MAO

NO. 7

FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE TEXT OF TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE,
DATED SEPTEMBER 20, 1976, ENTITLED: "KISSINGER ON MAO:
BRILLIANCE AND COLD BLOOD."

BEGIN TEXT:

"OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, TWO AMERICAN PRESIDENTS, SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER, ASSORTED US REPRESENTATIVES AND STATE DEPARTMENT AIDES SPENT MORE TIME WITH CHAIRMAN MAO THAN ANY OTHER WESTERNERS. KISSINGER HIMSELF, THE FORMER TEACHER, ADMITS THAT HE PLAYED THE STUDENT IN THE PRESENCE OF MAO -- WHOM HE MET SIX TIMES IN THE COURSE OF NINE VISITS TO CHINA. LAST WEEK, AFTER INTERVIEWS WITH KISSINGER AND TOP AIDES, TIME'S WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF HUGH SIDNEY CONSTRUCTED THIS CANDID AMERICAN PORTRAIT OF

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THE CHAIRMAN, WHOM THE SECRETARY CALLED 'THE GREATEST MAN'

HE HAD EVER KNOWN, FOR BOTH BAD AND GOOD.

"FROM FEBRUARY 1972 TO DECEMBER 1975, THE AMERICANS WATCHED AS THE ONCE ROBUST CHAIRMAN SHRANK WITH AGE. MAO MUST HAVE LOST 40 LBS. IN THAT TIME. HIS COMPLEXION TURNED PASTY GRAY AND HIS LOWER LIP BEGAN TO SAG, IMPAIRING HIS SPEECH SO THAT WORDS CAME OUT IN GUTTURAL BURSTS. THE LAST TIME THAT KISSINGER SAW MAO, HE WAS AFRAID THE OLD MAN WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TALK FOR TEN MINUTES. BUT THE TALK WENT ON FOR TWO HOURS. IT WAS 'THE MOST STUPENDOUS DEMONSTRATION OF WILL I HAVE EVER SEEN,' SAYS KISSINGER. MAO MUSTERED SO MUCH FORCE THAT EVEN THOUGH EACH WORD WAS A STRAIN, HE COMPLETED AN ASSESSMENT OF WORLD AFFAIRS THAT KISSINGER STILL TERMS 'EXTRAORDINARILY BRILLIANT.'

"'MAO GAVE ME THE MOST COLD-BLOODED ANALYSIS OF THE BALANCE OF WORLD POWER THAT I HAD EVER HEARD,' KISSINGER REPORTED. DESPITE THE CHAIRMAN'S STRONG IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT, HE ANALYZED THE WORLD SCENE IN REALISTIC TERMS, WHETHER THE PEOPLE ABOUT WHOM HE WAS TALKING WERE CAPITALISTS OR COMMUNISTS. THE AMERICANS FOUND THAT MAO'S ASSESSMENTS OF OTHER PEOPLE WERE HARD AND UNGIVING. 'MAO'S CAPACITY TO ADMIRE PEOPLE WAS SEVERELY LIMITED,' KISSINGER SAYS. YET HIS US VISITORS FOUND THAT HE DID ADMIRE CHARLES DE GAULLE AND HAD A 'SORT OF ADMIRATION' FOR BRITAIN'S FORMER TORY PRIME MINISTER EDWARD HEATH. MAO'S HATRED OF FORMER US SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN FOSTER DULLES, THE SYMBOL OF AMERICA'S POLICY OF NONRECOGNITION OF CHINA, BURNED BRIGHT TO THE END. BUT HE CAME TO RESPECT RICHARD NIXON. IN HIS TALKS WITH KISSINGER, HE WAS FRANK TO SAY HE WANTED TO SEE NIXON RE-ELECTED AND GEORGE MCGOVERN DEFEATED. HE WAS CONTEMPTUOUS OF MCGOVERN AND SAID THAT HE WAS A WEAK MAN.

"TO MAO, THE US' LOSS IN VIET-NAM WAS AN ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE SHOW OF WEAKNESS. HE COULD NOT COMPREHEND HOW A NATION BIG AND POWERFUL AS THE US WOULD GIVE UP A WAR AFTER LOSING ONLY 50,000 MEN. BUT IF THAT WAS A MYSTERY TO HIM, WATERGATE MAY HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE OF ONE.

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EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY WAS SACROSANCT IN MAO'S WORLD, AND HE THOUGHT THAT ANY GOVERNMENT THAT ALLOWED SUCH A THING TO HAPPEN HAD TO BE SOFT. HE MADE LITTLE JOKES ABOUT WATERGATE TO KISSINGER, BUT IT WAS NOT A CASUAL CONCERN OF MAO'S. HE BROUGHT IT UP SEVERAL TIMES IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AMERICANS, EXPRESSING HIS GREAT RESPECT FOR NIXON AND HIS DISDAIN FOR PEOPLE WHO WOULD TOPPLE SUCH A LEADER.

"MAO'S CENTRAL CONCERN WAS ALWAYS THE SOVIET UNION. HIS TALK ABOUT THE SOVIETS WAS UNCOMPROMISING; HE DESCRIBED THEM AS STUPID AND BRUTAL PEOPLE. THEY HAD CORRUPTED COMMUNISM. MAO WAS OPEN ABOUT HIS NEED TO USE THE US IN HIS STRATEGY AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. SELF-INTEREST MOTIVATED HIS DIPLOMATIC OPENING TO AMERICA. HE WAS PROUD THAT HE HAD STARTED IT AND WAS DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN IT.

"MAO BELIEVED THAT THERE WOULD BE A NUCLEAR WORLD WAR, AND THAT THE CHINESE, WITH THEIR SMALL FARMS, THEIR TUNNEL SYSTEM AND THEIR NUMBERS, WOULD EMERGE FROM THE SMOKING RUINS AS THE DOMINANT POWER. BUT, SAID KISSINGER, THERE WAS NO HINT THAT UNDER THESE CONDITIONS THE CHINESE WOULD REACH OUT AND TRY TO ABSORB THE WORLD. MAO NEVER TALKED WITH THE SECRETARY OR OTHERS LIKE AN IMPERIALIST. WHILE HE UNDERSTOOD AND VALUED STRENGTH, HE NEVER SPOKE OF IT IN TERMS OF TANKS AND PLANES. INDEED, HE EXPRESSED NO MATERIAL VISION OF CHINA'S FUTURE. HE WAS CREATING 'A NEW MAN,' AND THAT WAS A SPIRITUAL THING. MAO CONCERNED HIMSELF WITH MANKIND, BUT HAD LITTLE TIME FOR INDIVIDUAL MEN. 'MAO WAS TREATED LIKE A DIVINITY,' SAYS KISSINGER. 'I DO NOT THINK HE HAD ANY PERSONAL FRIENDS.' IN ALL THE HOURS OF TALK WITH THE SECRETARY, MAO NEVER ONCE MENTIONED HIS WIFE. HE DID, HOWEVER, MENTION NANCY KISSINGER ONCE, OBSERVING, 'SHE TOWERS OVER YOU.'

"IN THE LAST MEETINGS, MAO TALKED INCREASINGLY OF BEING 'CALLED BY GOD.' HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT SUCCESSION, THE GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD FOLLOW HIM. KISSINGER TRIED TO JOKE ABOUT IT, SAYING THAT THE SUMMONS FROM GOD WAS SOMETHING THAT MAO SHOULD NOT HEED. IF THE TWO EVER GOT TOGETHER, UNCLASSIFIED

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TEASED THE SECRETARY, IT WOULD BE TOO DIFFICULT A COMBINATION WITH WHICH TO CONTEND. DESPITE THE BANTER, THE AMERICANS WERE INTRIGUED BY THE OLD ATHEIST'S REPEATED REFERENCES TO GOD. WAS HE MELLOWING? OR WAS IT OUT OF REGARD FOR WESTERN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS? KISSINGER WAS NEVER QUITE SURE."

END TEXT.

ROBINSON

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